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## homesick for a minute love

by [narcissism](#)

### Summary

Somewhere, there's an unwritten rule that says don't make deals with the devil. Don't make deals with a witch should be right under it.

( or: the extremely self-indulgent halloween themed rom-com with witch mercy )

### Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

*i. orpheus, alone.*

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A desperate man will walk a thousand miles through hell for a solution to his problems.

Or in her case, maybe three miles in a dense forest.

She's twenty-two; that's when people are supposed to be making bad choices, right?

*God, I'm literally walking my dumb ass into a serial killer's waiting arms*, Fareeha thinks to herself, pulling her thin jacket closer around her. She shivers despite how she knows it's supposed to be 83 degrees today. The trees are larger than life itself, their spindly branches straining upwards, thick with inky green leaves, greedily soaking up the sunlight. Thin shafts of light pierce through the mass occasionally, patches of ominous white on the path she's on. She trudges past them and ignores how birdsong warps through the forest, dissonant notes faintly warbling in the

distance, nostalgic and melancholy.

She feels windchill soak through her bones, but feels no breeze.

The forest is an abyss, endlessly thick and stifling, sucking all the air to itself, and eventually she doesn't even need to look for a path - just follows the gravity, allows it to take her where it wills.

*Serial killers*, her brain reminds her helpfully. Her breathing picks up of its own accord and she grits her teeth.

She's nearing six foot and probably has more muscle than the average man. *I think I'm good to go*, she snarks back at herself.

Less than a hour into these woods and she's already sassing herself - that's a good sign.

She's walking through this forest in search for a myth, a minute hope, a second chance - call it what you want it. Gabe called it a mirage.

*It*, of course, being the witch at the end of the woods.

Fareeha pulls her bloodied jacket even tighter around herself, so violently she's borderline choking herself. She'll suffocate in this forest, she knows it, the air feels hot and tight around her, and the smell of blood wafts upwards from her jacket, sickeningly thick, clogging in the back of her throat, closing in on her lungs - she'll suffocate, she'll suffocate, she'll suffocate.

But then she sees it - firelight at the edge of the woods, peering curiously through the foliage, shyly beckoning her. She starts to jog towards it, and speeds up, pumping her legs and arms. She breaks into a sprint, a frenzied dash towards her perceived finish line - never daring to look back, fearing that she will lose her conviction if she allows the forest to swallow it up.

The more she runs, the farther it looks, but that's what a mirage is, and Gabe wouldn't have lied to her. So she keeps running, pushing past her physical limits.

And she finally reaches it.

It's all rather sudden and overwhelming. The forest ends in a clean, surgical fashion, bleeds into a lightly lit glen, diffused sunlight glowing smoothly around the meadow, mild and gentle, in a stark comparison to the all-consuming forest she had just been in. There's a single house, simple and unassuming at the center, with a small deck and a worn looking chair swaying next to a warm lantern.

She catches her breath, hands on her knees, bent damn near in half, and soaks it all in.

Fareeha approaches, and there's no burst of light or shock of green or anything dramatic at all. The chair creaks. She feels like chaos in a calm scene - black hair mussed and jacket torn and rusted with blood, hands shaking.

She feels foolish, but she calls out into the meadow. "Hello?" Her voice grates along her throat, and no one answers.

She walks closer, gingerly makes her way onto the deck, anxiety building in the pit of her stomach, churning and climbing its way up her organs, twisting so violently she fears her heart will start to beat into her throat. She steels herself and clears the pulse out of the base of her throat and knocks.

The witch will be fearsome - and terrible. Cartoon witches dance in her head, green and gnarled

and cackling.

The door opens.

She's hideous! she's horrifying! She's - nothing of the sort.

A small blonde woman peers out from the doorway, a pair of reading glasses slipping down the bridge of her nose, with a gently bemused smile lying upon her lips. She runs her hand through her fair hair, and Fareeha's voice catches in her throat.

"Hello there," she greets kindly, curiosity dancing alight in her eyes.

"Um, hi," Fareeha says back, mentally kicking herself.

"Can I help you?"

"I'm... looking for a witch?" She says, questioning herself and her sanity. "A witch," she repeats with more conviction.

"That's me," the woman - witch? - says gleefully. She rocks onto the balls of her heels, clasping her hands in front of her. "How was the walk here? I think it's a bit lengthy, myself."

"It - It was alright, ma'am," she mumbles, her tongue tripping through her words, feeling like a fool. At any moment, she knows the woman will whip out a jar of candy and pinch her cheeks and say Happy Halloween - and Fareeha will take a long walk off a short cliff.

"Ma'am," the witch repeats, a little amused, a little confused. "Do I look that old?"

"No, not at all," she responds hastily, hands flaring out in front of her in alarm.

The witch erupts in peals of bright laughter, clapping her hands together once in mirth.

Fareeha wrings her hands. She doesn't look a day over twenty - and also, doesn't look anything like a powerful *bruja*, as Gabe had called her - she's much smaller than Fareeha herself, wearing a plain black turtleneck, a skirt and dainty heels - she doesn't look all-powerful - she looks, well, domestic.

"Ah," she sighs, wiping at her eyes merrily. "How rude of me, standing here, laughing and *not* inviting you in. Would you care for anything? Water? Juice?"

"No thank you," she says, instinctively wetting her lips.

Blue eyes drop down to her lips, and the witch goes a little pink before moving away from the doorway. "Come in! Excuse the mess."

She looks around the house as she makes her way to a small living room. It's very... modern.

The witch bustles around the living room, gesturing for her to sit, as she pulls papers and musses her hair and puts her glasses aside. "So..."

She sits at attention, spine snapping straight, tension finally breaking through her initial shock.

The witch smiles again, waiting.

"Oh. Sorry, I'm here to ask a favor."

"I was waiting for your name, but we can get straight to business too," she says kindly.

“Fareeha,” she blurts out. “My name’s Fareeha,” she amends, clearing her throat and looking away.

The witch giggles again, nodding gently. “Okay, Fareeha. My name’s Angela. It’s nice to meet you,” she says warmly.

“It’s nice to meet you,” she responds automatically.

“Well, you don’t have to sound so excited about it,” Angela teases.

“I- er, I’m sorry,” she says, halfheartedly.

“Is everything okay? Is something wrong?” Angela asks gently, picking up on her mood. “Let’s hear that favor.”

“I,” she starts, swallowing past the knot in her throat, looking out the window and ignoring the keen blue eyes settled on her frame. “I need you to bring someone back from the dead,” she says firmly, jaw clenching.

Angela doesn’t say anything at first, lips pursing, eyes tightening. “I see.”

“Can you do it?” She asks, unwavering.

Angela sighs, suddenly looking much older as she stands up and paces away. “I’m sorry for your loss,” she says quietly.

“Can you do it,” Fareeha insists, a little angrily, desperation edging in her tone.

Angela’s eyes drop to her ragged clothes and takes them in sadly for the first time, unresponsive to anger.

“Please,” she all but begs. “Just tell me if you can.”

Something in Angela relents, and she sighs again. “I can. But it comes at no small price.”

“Price doesn’t matter,” she continues doggedly.

Angela regards her evenly for a little while, her arms crossing as she stares her down obstinately.

Fareeha meets her gaze head on.

Angela’s shoulders slump, almost imperceptibly. “Who did you lose?”

“My mother,” she says dispassionately, clenching her fists.

All resistance leaves Angela’s frame immediately. “I’m sorry,” she says, sounding genuinely pained.

“It’s fine,” Fareeha says instinctively, robotically. “What’s the price?”

“A life for a life, my dear,” Angela says, eyebrows raising.

“So what, I promise you my soul or something?”

Angela laughs, amused, despite the grim situation. “Nothing that *stereotypical*. I just can’t raise a life without creating a life-debt, of sorts.”

“So,” Fareeha continues solemnly. “I have to kill someone?”

“Goodness, no! Nothing that horrid,” Angela says, hands flying to mouth in shock. “Do I look like that kind of a witch?”

*You don't look like a witch at all*, is on the tip of her tongue, but Angela cuts in before she gets a word out.

“Don't answer that,” she warns.

“What's the price, then?”

Angela hums, regarding her with a unreadable look in her eyes.

“Well?”

Angela tips her chin up, blue eyes catching the light pouring in from the meadow outside and glinting green, finally looking like a witch for the first time in their conversation. “Your firstborn child,” she says, steely tone brooking no discussion.

Fareeha frowns, disbelief-saturated, eyebrows raising.

“Well?” The witch parrots back, sinister smirk twisting her features cruelly, previously warm afternoon light starting to shine cold and bleak.

"Isn't that... the *most* stereotypical thing to ask, as a witch?" The moment ends on that note, and Fareeha can almost hear the atmospheric magic around her shatter as the witch holds her head in her hands.

"Well," Angela sputters. "I just, I figured - I don't have to explain myself to you!" She cries out indignantly. "Are you going to accept or not? Because I'll kick you out if you're just going to stand there and poke holes in my profession."

Raising her hands in surrender, Fareeha nods. "I'll accept."

Eyeing her suspiciously for a moment, the witch examines her with a frown before nodding, apparently unable to find any signs of deception. Bending to grab something off the coffee table, she holds her hand out. "Give me your hand."

She rests her hand on top of Angela's warily, and moves to jerk her hand back when she feels the press of a blade. Angela's hand wraps around her wrist impossibly fast, holding her hand steady as she presses her knife in just deep enough to draw blood. Her own eyes widen as she watches crimson seep onto Angela's skin, watches as it glows golden, and feels her skin begin to knit itself back together.

Angela steps back away from her, a subtle light still emitting from her, and meets her eyes.

Fareeha shouts in shock - Angela's previously blue eyes gleam a brilliant amber gold, and her hands cup a radiant light as she croons to it in a foreign tongue. There's a flash of white and Fareeha turns away, eyes stinging. There's a soft thud, and she whips back around, blinking rapidly as she tries to look around the room once again.

Angela is kneeling on the floor, shoulders heaving a little, swaying unsteadily.

"Is it done?" She whispers near reverently, afraid to break the silence.

Angela looks up from where she kneels, eyes no longer shining, but still the color of molten amber. She smiles tiredly. "Just about." She shuffles around and looks up again. "Seal it with a kiss?" She asks cheekily, as amber transitions to a lighter whiskey color, swirling violently as the light fades around her.

She frowns.

"Tough crowd," she murmurs, picking herself up off the ground and reaching a hand out to Fareeha, asking permission as it comes closer to her face.

Fareeha nods.

Angela taps the dying light at her fingertips against her forehead tenderly.

Her knees buckle, and she takes several steps back as she shakes her head. "What was that?" She asks gruffly.

"A reminder," she nods tiredly, sitting down at one of the couches. "If you forget about handing over your first born, you'll watch your mother die a thousand times over every time you close your eyes. Just in case you get any ideas about not going through with your end of the deal."

"You're really insistent on getting a child."

"It's for the best," she answers, yawning into a fist and curling up sleepily.

"What would you need my firstborn for? Just out of curiosity."

"Ritual sacrifice."

"What?" Fareeha jolts towards her, and the witch regards her through one eye.

"I'm kidding," she says placatingly, waving her hand dismissively. "The child fulfills the life-debt for resurrecting your mother. I get to rear an apprentice. This is the most humane thing I could think of."

She hesitates, watching as Angela's breathing slows. Still suspended in disbelief, she makes her way to the door, scarcely daring to believe that the blonde sleeping on the couch has truly brought her mother back.

"Clean yourself up before you go and meet your mother," comes a soft reminder.

The walk back is shorter than she remembers.

She never once looks behind her.

And when she sees her mother sitting on the steps of her apartment, she falls to her knees and cries in front of her for the first time in five years. Ana Amari is beyond confused, but takes it in grace.

She doesn't remember how it feels to die, but Fareeha remembers what it's like to lose her mother and be utterly and completely helpless.

Twenty-two is the age most people spend kissing too many strangers in shady bars, but twenty-two is the age Fareeha decides to trade her firstborn child for her mother's life - a fact that Ana Amari will hang her for if she ever finds out.

Some mistakes are just a little bigger than others, she supposes.

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Something Fareeha didn't bet on was her love life becoming absolutely *abysmal* after promising to give her firstborn away.

It's not like she's actively trying to avoid settling down - things just never seem to work out.

At first, she was too busy trying to pass the bar exam to focus on dating.

And then she was far too consumed by cases to maintain a serious relationship.

When her mother tries to intervene, the dates just flop.

And before she knows it, ten years pass. The big three-two.

Thirty two.

*Fuck, that witch must be so pissed.*

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*ii. orpheus, reimagined.*

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She sips at her coffee irritably. It's been a long day. It's finally her lunch break, though, and things are looking up.

"Ms. Amari? There's someone who's here for you."

"I'm on lunch break, Natalie, please tell them to make an appointment," she responds tiredly, pinching the bridge of her nose.

"Sure thing, Ms. Amari - hey, ma'am, excuse me, you can't just go in there!"

The door to her office opens abruptly, and her assistant trails in after the client, apologetically wringing her hands and stuttering out an explanation.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but I'm currently on break," she begins politely, turning to face her insufferable client before freezing in place, shocked.

Angela waves cheerfully. "Hello, Fareeha."

"Angela?" Fareeha says, unsure if she's hallucinating.

"Surprise!" Angela laughs softly, gesticulating incomprehensibly.

"Ms. Amari?" Natalie questions nervously.

"It's not a problem, Natalie, thank you," she says dismissively. "Please close the door and *don't* let anyone else in."

"It's been ten years, Fareeha," Angela begins, good-natured as ever. "You've done well for

yourself."

"You don't look a day older than when I first met you," she says, a little shocked. Angela really doesn't look different at all - she's in white instead of black this time, but it's as if she had made the deal yesterday instead of ten years ago.

Angela waves her fingers. "Magic," she teases, winking.

Fareeha rolls her eyes. "Of course."

"I suppose you know why I'm here then," Angela comments lightly, stepping around her to perch daintily at the edge of her desk.

"I - yeah. I haven't had any serious relationships for a while now," she confesses.

"I see." Angela toys with her name plate.

"I'm sorry for that," she says sincerely.

Angela hums, considering the situation at hand. "I'm not getting any younger, you know," she says slyly.

"Isn't that what magic's for?"

Angela clicks her tongue disapprovingly. "Not the point," she chides. "It's been ten years."

Fareeha smiles weakly, mind going blank - *some lawyer I am*, she thinks bitterly to herself. *Can't even defend myself.*

"Can't you just artificially inseminate? Why go through a whole relationship if the child's just going to me anyway?" Angela prods.

"I - Well, I didn't really see myself carrying," she says.

Angela observes her silently. "Hm," she says finally. "Well, I suppose you'll just have to settle for seeing a lot of me in the future."

"What are you going to do?" Fareeha asks.

"Well, I've got to get you to *deliver* somehow, don't mind the pun there - and the best way is if I help!" Angela says, exuberant, hands clapping together. She smiles radiantly, and Fareeha catches herself staring too much. "What do you say?"

She feels her cheeks heat up. Thankful for her tan complexion, she shrugs, turning away. "If you think that's the best solution."

"It's settled then," Angela says brightly, sauntering out of her office, overtly pleased with her own solution. "I'll be seeing you later, Fareeha!"

Fareeha drops her head into her hands and groans loudly.

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Fareeha leaves the office late that night, nearing eleven pm, exhausted. Packing up her briefcase and heading towards her car, she rubs at her eyes and sighs, thankful that the day is over. It's a quiet drive back home, and she's honest-to-god ready to collapse into her bed and just sleep.



Which is why she's nothing but pleased to see Angela sitting on the porch of her house.

That's a lie.

"What are you doing here?"

"The commute from my house at edge of the woods was a bit far, so I figured I'd just move in with you," Angela says, cocking her head to the right.

"You can't do that," she responds, still at a loss for words. "I - How did you know where I lived anyway?"

"I'm already here," Angela says, expectant. "And I didn't know, I just teleported here. Are you going to let me in?"

"No!"

"No?" Her whole frame wilts, and she looks devastated.

"Well, I, - you can't just turn up out of nowhere and do this," Fareeha says weakly, hands up in a meek protest.

"But I'm here already," Angela wheedles, blue eyes pleading. "Please? Just until everything's over."

Fareeha groans silently, doing her best to avoid meeting her eyes. She hopes the gay gods just smite her now.

"Please, Fareeha," Angela says, dulcet voice caressing the curves of her name sweetly.

An unmitigated disaster of pure *gay*: Fareeha Amari. "Fine," she relents, still staunchly avoiding Angela's eyes. "But just until we get everything sorted."

"Excellent," Angela exclaims, cheery.

She wonders what she's gotten herself into.

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"You only have one bed?"

"I'm single."

"I know, hon. That's why *I'm* here," Angela responds brightly.

"Can't you just, I don't know, magic one here?"

"I'm tired!"

"But you had enough energy to teleport here and wait for hours."

"And I'm tired because I did all that. Don't you have a sleeping bag?"

"Well, no," she sighs. "I'll sleep on the couch."

"No!" Angela objects immediately. "I can't kick you out of your bed. I'll sleep on the couch."

"You're a... guest," Fareeha shrugs. "It's fine. My couch is quite comfortable."

"I'm not taking the bed if it means you have to sleep on the couch." She crosses her arms stubbornly.

"Well, unless you want to share a bed with me, then there's no other option!" Fareeha snaps tiredly, looking at her watch. 12:03 AM blares in red.

"Splendid. We'll sleep in the same bed then."

Fareeha sputters. "No. No way. This isn't some movie."

"You said yourself that there's no other option! Implying that sharing the bed with you *is* an option," Angela points out defiantly.

*Fucking logic.* She clears her throat uncomfortably. "Okay, but-"

"What's wrong with sharing a bed? It's queen sized - big enough for the two of us. It'll be like a slumber party," Angela says, wistful.

"What are we, like, twelve?"

Angela's eyes mist over at her comment and she looks away, lost in her own thoughts for a second. "If you're that uncomfortable with the idea, then-" She wrings her hands.

Fareeha panics at seeing melancholy take over Angela's normally bubbly disposition. "No, it's okay, I'm not uncomfortable," she insists hurriedly. She's really bad with crying girls.

"You're being quite nice to a strange witch who asks a lot of you," she notes, still looking a little forlorn.

"You gave me and my mother a second chance at being family. I owe you much more than just a couple small comforts," Fareeha responds in turn, clearing her throat immediately after and cracking her knuckles at her side, feeling oddly vulnerable. She doesn't know what compelled her to share that, but Angela looks appreciative.

"Thank you," Angela says, looking at her a little strangely.

"For what?"

Angela blinks owlishly. She graces her with a small smile and looks past Fareeha's shoulder, towards the bedroom.

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So she not only promises her firstborn child to a witch, she sleeps with her as well.

Not like that!

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(She wishes like that.)

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It's strange, waking up next to someone on the other side of the bed after months of sleeping alone. It's not at all unpleasant, just a little jarring. She looks to the digital clock sitting on her

nightstand and swings her legs off the side of the bed, careful not to jostle Angela, who protests with a drowsy whine despite her attempts. Fareeha freezes in her tracks, the cold hardwood floors creaking under her foot once before falling silent. Angela flips over and instinctively curls into the warm hollow she left on her side of the bed, content once more.

Fareeha lets out a breath, and pads to the bathroom to wash up and prepare for the day.

She goes for a quick run around her block, and returns to a sound asleep witch, still curled up in the right half of the bed. She showers and dresses, and still Angela doesn't wake.

*Sleeping beauty*, comes the thought, unbidden and unwelcome.

She settles for rattling around her kitchen and cooking breakfast and setting a pot of coffee on.

*That* gets Angela's attention, apparently, because she pokes her head out of the bedroom, eyes sleep-soft and soft white-gold locks mussed.

"Good morning," she mumbles through yawns. Stepping out gingerly, she takes languid strides to where Fareeha stands, still cooking her breakfast, and leans over at the counter, looking up at Fareeha as she cooks.

"Good morning," she responds in kind, attention fully focused on her eggs. "Help yourself to some coffee."

"Thank you kindly," Angela beams. She shuffles around the kitchen. "Where are your mugs?"

"They are, um, in the top," she says distractedly, trying to flip her egg in the frying pan. "Top cabinet on the left, over there," she finishes lamely. She hears cabinet doors open and close and she swivels to check up on Angela and give clearer directions, but her mind goes blank when she sees what Angela has on - which is to say, her shirt and a pair of lace boy-shorts. She chokes and turns back around quickly.

"Ah, I found them," Angela says, unaware of the havoc she's caused.

"Good," Fareeha manages weakly.

Angela stops on a dime and pivots to face her, brows furrowing, nose twitching. "Are your eggs burning?"

Galvanized, Fareeha flips her - *sadly* - burnt eggs over onto her waiting plate, and sidesteps around Angela to grab at her silverware. She sets the plate down on the table, and reaffirms her tenuous grip on her self-control. "Would you like anything to eat?"

"I'm fine, thank you," Angela says, tone still kindly even and polite, although she eyes the eggs sitting on Fareeha's plate with something like apprehension.

"They don't usually turn out this way," she says, waving at her plate, feeling a twinge of embarrassment pull taut in her cheeks.

"I'm not a big breakfast person," Angela notes graciously, eyes winking into crescents as she smiles.

Fareeha nods and starts on her eggs, chewing and swallowing mechanically, ignoring the acrid taste of the burnt edges.

Angela sips at her coffee.

"Well, what-"

"So, how-"

They start at the same time, cutting off abruptly.

Angela laughs, and Fareeha does too, a little.

"You go first," Fareeha says.

"I was just going to ask what the plan was for today." Mirth dances in the corners of her eyes, and she directs her smile into her coffee cup.

"Plan?"

"You seem like the kind to plan out your weekends."

"I usually am," Fareeha says, a wave of anxiety washing over her.

"What's wrong?" Angela says, picking up on her sudden change in moods.

"I have a standing breakfast with my mother on Saturdays," she murmurs distractedly, looking at the clock. "And I'm twenty minutes late."

"You should go," Angela insists, eyes wide.

She pats down her pockets hurriedly, looking for her keys. "I'll be back in a hour or so," she says hurriedly, rushing about, and stepping into her shoes, cursing under her breath.

Angela waves serenely from the kitchen and continues nursing her coffee.

She opens the door violently, taking one step and slamming directly into her mother, who has her right hand raised and poised to knock.

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*Perfect.*

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"Oh, Fareeha!" Ana begins, cheery, not at all off-put by her daughter's unorthodox greeting. "You were running late so I decided to swing by to see if you had forgotten."

"No, no, I didn't forget. I was just running late," Fareeha says, still off-guard.

"Is something the matter? It's not like you to be late," Ana prods.

"No, nothing's the matter," she says, blanching as she realizes that Angela is still standing in full sight of the doorway. She shifts to block her mother's sightline. "We can just go now."

Her mother narrows her eyes, but agrees suspiciously.

She ushers her mother out, ignoring the way her mother bats back at her, annoyed at being rushed. "I'm not getting any younger these days, Fareeha, you have to give a sack of old bones like me some time to get around," she chides.

"Yes, mother, I just want to get the day started," Fareeha says, resting a hand on her mother's

shoulder and blinking as her hand is batted away.

A floorboard creaks behind them, and Ana Amari whips around faster than Fareeha can even blink.

Angela smiles sheepishly, caught in the act of sneaking out of the kitchen.

"Hello dear," Ana greets exuberantly. "And who might you be?"

Fareeha groans. "Sack of old bones my a-" She's stopped by a sharp knock to her diaphragm. Winded but chastised, she glares down at her mother silently.

Angela looks at her nervously, and doesn't speak a word, still clad in one of Fareeha's shirts and her underwear, looking quite mortified.

"Mother," she says evenly, once she gets her breath back. "It's not what it looks like."

"Oh?" Ana crows gleefully. "Please, do tell what it is that I'm seeing then."

"She's just staying over," Fareeha says weakly.

Angela waves with her fingers meekly.

"I didn't catch your name," Ana says kindly, sharp eyes focusing on Angela now.

"It's Angela," she says, clearing her throat and standing straighter. Although, as if suddenly realizing her lack of clothes, she shrinks back down and shoots a casual smile that doesn't come close to masking her pink cheeks.

"Angela," Ana muses, peering around her. "She's quite beautiful," she says, approving, to her daughter.

"Mom," Fareeha groans.

"What? I'm only blind in *one* eye," her mother teases.

Angela slips away.

"So, is she why you've been turning down the dates I set you up on?" Ana says, turning and effectively cornering Fareeha.

"No," she says guiltily.

"Because I understand if she is. She's much more of a looker than the other girls I found for you."

Angela comes back fully dressed.

Ana smiles warmly, now regarding her in full. "So, Angela, what do you do? Fareeha's a very successful lawyer. A very good candidate for a future wife."

"Mother," she protests. "I'm not a piece of meat to sell."

"Now, Fareeha, *you* are not as young as you used to be, and I would like to hold my grandchild before these old limbs of mine can give out. It's very difficult getting a wife as you get older," Ana says sagely.

"*Mother*," she protests even louder.

Angela stays silently, but looks amused.

"So, Angela," Ana continues, fixing Fareeha with a pointed look. "What do you do?"

"I- ah," Angela begins.

"She-" Fareeha cuts in, intent on making up a profession. *Witch* is probably not a good job to tell her mother, after all.

"I asked Angela," Ana says sternly. She smiles back at Angela, and Fareeha closes her mouth mutinously. "What were you saying, dear?"

"I'm a doctor," Angela finishes, nonchalant.

"A *doctor*," Ana repeats triumphantly.

"A *doctor*?" Fareeha spits out disbelievingly at the same time.

"You didn't even know, Fareeha?" Ana says, quick to catch on. She clucks her tongue. "Hopping in bed and asking questions later. I knew you were doing something wrong, otherwise you would have settled down by now."

She drops her head in her arms, beyond embarrassed at this point.

"Brains and beauty," Ana proclaims jubilantly, reaching over to pat Angela on the cheek. "I hope you'll stay with Fareeha. She's a very good person. A little dense, but she has a heart of gold, you know."

"I'm not going anywhere just yet," Angela says blithely, winking at Fareeha. "She's got a couple of promises that I'm still waiting on."

Ana positively beams at Angela before gathering herself. "Well, I should go. You two must have had a late night if Fareeha was sleeping in today," she notes shamelessly. "It was *very* nice meeting you, Angela. I'm glad we met today, or only God knows how long Fareeha would have hidden you away for."

"It was nice meeting you as well!" Angela replies, untroubled.

Fareeha continues to cradle her head in her arms. "Goodbye mother," she says, muffled into her sleeves.

Ana waves, cheshire grin widening at the sight of her mortified daughter, and closes the door.

"Well, that was interesting," Angela comments.

Fareeha groans, and Angela continues chuckling.

.

"So, a doctor?" Fareeha asks.

"I have a lot a free time on my hands," Angela says defensively. "Magic is a dying belief, and I have to support myself somehow."

"As a doctor, you must be able to save a lot more lives with the help of your magic then," Fareeha muses. "Is that legal?"

"Funny enough," Angela says drily. "I haven't approached the ethics board about it."

Fareeha leaves it at that.

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They settle into a strange routine, after a couple weeks. Angela works strange hours, and Fareeha always works late. But she cooks dinner and they always eat together no matter how late it is.

After years of eating dinner alone in her cabin, it's no wonder why Angela's not keen on eating by herself.

Fareeha finds herself wondering how long it had been since someone last treated her gently. Without fear, without reservations, without underhanded motives?

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Far too long, judging by how affection-starved Angela seems to be.

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She does seem to inspire idolatry wherever she goes. Angela naturally embodies calm surety and self-confidence, and this paired with her innate compassion and gentle nature causes even the most stubborn to love her, even just a little bit.

Fareeha sees it on the face of the barista who would hand Angela her coffee, the faces of her resident interns, even manages to see the grudging admiration from senior surgeons who should, by all means, resent the position Angela holds over them.

She never sees it when Angela mirrors the same exact expression when she drops lunch off for her at the hospital, or when she cooks dinner and waits until 1 am so they can eat together. She can't see it when Angela leaves a cup of tea on her desk, not when she's so invested in her case files. She misses it when Angela smiles a little too hard and laughs a little too long at her lamest jokes. She doesn't realize it when sometimes they wake up closer than they started, and she can't possibly know the way Angela's arms reach out to pull her back when she leaves the bed. How can she possibly know when Angela always drops her arms down before they reach their destination?

Fareeha can't possibly know the way serotonin zips at the base of Angela's ribs, thudding in her veins, can't possibly know the way her breath stills in her lungs when Angela sees her.

.

She does see the way she looks in the mirror, early mornings, after Angela curls into the empty space she leaves on the bed.

Homesick for a minute love.

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*Shit.*

.

Angela doesn't change for her realization, and neither does Fareeha. They continue to exist, in a glorious haze of synchronized *being*, just enjoying each other's company, and the subtle intimacies that come from living with someone.

For example, the way that Angela can take black coffee like a champ, but prefers it with cream and two sugars.

Or perhaps the way Fareeha will pick around vegetables in her dinner subconsciously before realizing what exactly she's doing.

Maybe in the ironic way that Angela is just a tad bit allergic to apples.

Fareeha doesn't let her live it down, because an apple a day really does keep the doctor away.

And perhaps, it is most apparent in the way that Fareeha never eats apples anymore, and Angela cooks more meats than she does vegetables.

To learn someone, and to *live* it are very different things indeed.

They are one and the same in their household.

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Intimacy only goes as far as that - and they never take it further, no matter how close they end up on Fareeha's queen-sized bed.

It's a careful dance they have structured, the finest tango Angela has ever been a part of: a dance of restraint and boundaries, one of constantly toeing the line but never crossing it - a third party may call it *skinny love*.

Ana Amari calls it *cowardice*.

And oh, how it sets her veins aflame. But to know it, to call it by something, to quantify it, this immutable, faceless, nameless quality, would be to risk losing it. Modern magic need only hold up under scrutiny for five minutes - the trick is making everyone believe the *same lie* for the *same five minutes*. Angela hasn't known anything like this - who is to say that it won't disappear as quickly as it came about? Who is to say that this is not her and Fareeha living the same lie for the same five minutes?

So she plays it safe and refrains from calling it anything.

She doesn't want her five minutes to end.

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Five minutes will always end.

Of course it will - time bows to no man, or rather, no woman.

It's far too idyllic, and Murphy's law looms in the background.

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Fareeha starts having nightmares.

They start out very minuscule - barely enough to phase her. She wakes up in the middle of the night sometimes, but Angela's always by her side and she falls back asleep to the rhythm of her breathing.

They get worse. Soon, it's snatches of her worst nightmare, a dull glimmer of dead eyes, a screech and a bang, and it jolts her awake suddenly enough that it disturbs Angela. She'll see her hands in



the moonlight and will watch crimson seep over her fingertips and drip down her arms. She's forced to scrub her hands raw every night for a week.

Angela doesn't know what's wrong, but she sees the darkening bags under Fareeha's eyes and starts to fear the worst.

Surely enough, the dreams get more convoluted and more dark each time. Fareeha will startle so violently it will rouse Angela in the middle of the night, and the knowledge that this curse is her doing will keep her awake for the rest of the night, alongside Fareeha as she lives the worst moments of her life in never-ending loops.

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"This has to stop," Angela bursts out, quasi-chipper, her own thin veneer of bravado. "It's time to get you a date!" She exclaims, smiling.

"I don't want to date," Fareeha sighs quietly, elbows braced on her knees.

"There's no other way to stop the nightmares," Angela says, even-keeled, as guilt creeps heavy around her shoulders. "I would know. It's my curse," she continues, wincing a little.

"They're not unbearable," Fareeha says, lying through her teeth.

"I've found someone suitable," Angela forges on.

"I said I didn't want to."

"Then what do you want? To live with it until it drives you to insanity?"

Fareeha bites back the 'you' sitting on the tip of her tongue. "If it has to come to that, then yes."

Angela looks pained.

.

Angela was not kidding around when she said *insanity*, Fareeha finds out soon enough. The dreams keep getting worse and worse and worse, somehow. Each night trumps the last, and soon she's seeing morbid carmine bleed into her vision during the day.

She can't focus, because the dreams consume her life.

They're so bad.

They get even worse still.

Until they just *stop*, one day.

Angela's curled around her when she wakes one morning, their faces mere centimeters apart, and she feels the uneven breaths Angela puffs out against her face, feels the anchoring of Angela's forehead pressed solidly against hers - and that's all she feels. No more fear, no more blood, no more dying.

It's so blissful.

Angela can't contain her smile when she reports the good news.

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"Just one date," Angela wheedles. "To really seal the deal," she says, looking pale.

Fareeha agrees. She knows the date won't work out, but agrees for Angela's sake anyway.

Angela's smile is worth it.

.

Angela's tucked into bed when she gets back from her date.

"How did it go?" She murmurs from under the sheets.

"Well, I started the date off with a pun and she looked like she was in pain," Fareeha jokes.

"Poor girl," Angela says with a small chuckle and feigned sympathy.

"Let's just say there won't be a second date - are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Angela snuffles.

"Are you sick?"

"No, just tired."

"You should get some sleep, then," Fareeha says softly. "I'll wash up. Don't wait up, okay? Just go to sleep."

Angela's moving around restlessly when she gets back from the bathroom, but stills when she climbs into bed. Fareeha presses the back of her hand to Angela's forehead gingerly, checking her temperature, worried. Angela presses into the touch, and soon she's sleeping.

But she's woken by movement in the night, and Angela's up.

"What's wrong?" She whispers, as Angela looks listlessly through the windows.

The pale moonlight seeps in through her curtains and lights upon Angela, settling around her in a creamy wash of twilight. She looks closer, and Angela's cheeks glint in the light, so she clambers out of bed, stomach hollowing out, and sits down by Angela's side.

"Hey," she calls softly, reaching a hand towards her.

Angela turns and discretely dabs at her eyes.

Fareeha isn't fooled. "What's wrong?" She asks persistently, urging Angela to face her. And when Angela finally does turn to face her, she damn near jumps away. She knows that look. She's seen it in the mirror everyday for the past three weeks - hollowed out, and dizzily lost.

"Did you take the curse away?" She asks softly, moving her hand to rest on Angela's shoulder.

Angela nods mutely.

"Did you turn it back onto yourself?" She whispers.

A nod again.

Her eyes shutter close, and her hand winds its way to the back of Angela's neck, pulling her closer, winding herself tighter against Angela, as if she would be able to shield her as long as she

just *didn't let go*.

"Why?" She asks simply.

"I didn't want to lose you," Angela answers simply.

"You're not going to," Fareeha says, jaw clenching, pulling Angela impossibly closer in her embrace.

"I am," she cries softly. "I'm going to lose you no matter what. I'm doomed to," she says mournfully.

"You're not," Fareeha repeats stubbornly.

"I lose everyone I care about. My parents, my friends, my patients. There's a reason why I isolated myself before you came wandering through my woods, and it wasn't because I wanted to."

"Then why didn't you stay there?" Fareeha asks, anger stilling and quieting, breath bated.

"Why didn't I stay there?" Angela barks out a cynical laugh. "Why? Because a certain someone with sad eyes and a heart of gold came to ask for their loved one. Because someone saw me for something more than just a means to their end, because you made me feel alive and *human*. Because I am in love with-

Fareeha cuts her off, carding both hands through fine golden hair, shining platinum in the moonlight, and pressing her lips to Angela's finally, *finally, finally*. Angela falls right into it, like she's ready for it, like she's been *dreaming* of it. They fit together so well, melding the chemistry of their fingerprints into the other's skin, reverently memorizing the curves and edges and burning the sensation into muscle memory, breathing in sync to fall back together again.

It's more than a kiss - it's pure debauchery woven from the frayed edges of their restraint, drinking *everything* about this moment in, the way moonlight illuminates through the backs of eyelids, the way gold burns in spidery-veins everywhere Fareeha touches, branching out and fading, seconds of golden glory marking itself in Angela's skin.

Angela pulls away first, sooty lashes wet with tears, and lips swollen and trembling as realization sinks in and pounds through her blood. Fear freezes its way around her heart and exhilaration burns twice as hot. Twilight streams in around her like a cape of sheer starlight, and dust motes dance idly in the air, shimmering around her, and she's tempted to fall to her knees, but Angela beats her to it, sliding off the bed, kneeling and looking up, so *devout* that Fareeha has to look away from how the night glows in her eyes, and crystalline tears fades from her skin.

No one speaks.

Angela forcibly sears the image of Fareeha into the backs of her eyelids, and sees her lit up by moonlight in the darkness anyway, remembers how it twines around her powerful frame like the moon is her lover.

Breathing slows.

Fareeha smiles, and Angela breathes out a watery chuckle.

"I guess you could say I was *bewitched* by you from the very start," she jokes hoarsely.

"I can't believe you just said that. That wasn't even a good pun."

"Oh, so now that you have me, you don't think my puns are funny anymore?"

"I liked some of them! Just not this one."

"*Witch* one?"

"Like the one with the- I'm leaving, right now." Angela stands to leave, rubbing at her eyes and stifling a laugh.

"You're talking in full sentences again, which means I need to work a little harder," Fareeha says, laughing and catching Angela around the waist. She smiles indulgently, pulling Angela back down and pinning her down with her hips.

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The night ends with Angela curled into her side, their legs tangled together, hearts beating in sync where their fingers are interlaced. Angela breathes a mantra into her collarbone, but she can't quite make the words out.

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*iii. orpheus, fulfilled.*

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She pays her life debt - and hands her firstborn to Angela some years later. Angela holds their child like she's never going to let go, and her eyes well up.

"Hi darling," she whispers. "You look just like your mother."

Fareeha smiles as her wife coos at their daughter, and rests her eyes.

Angela presses her lips to the top of her head.

.

*This is home, this is home, this is home.*

## End Notes

I just really like halloween. Say hi to me at my tumblr: [nxneteens.tumblr.com](http://nxneteens.tumblr.com) :) Thanks for reading! x

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